



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SUMMIT BRINGS LOCAL COMMUNITIES TOGETHER TO SOLVE STATE'S OBESITY PROBLEMS

INDIANAPOLIS – To combat the negative health effects of Hoosiers being overweight and obese, INShape Indiana hosted its first-ever Health Summit on obesity prevention today in Indianapolis. Indiana ranks ninth in the nation for obesity.

"We all know the bad statistics. Obesity is limiting lives and life quality and holding us back economically as a state," said Governor Mitch Daniels. "With more than a third of Hoosiers overweight, it's time for community leaders to show leadership in encouraging healthy choices."

Approximately 400 individuals representing more than 50 counties and greater than 200 organizations participated in the Summit, including leaders from the medical, business, faith-based, school, and government communities. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) sent representatives to participate in the Summit. Laura Kettle Kahn, Ph.D. and Jeff McKenna with the CDC shared with participants ideas and advice from across the nation that Hoosiers can put into practice in their own communities.

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield partnered with INShape Indiana to host the Summit, where they released a new resource for Hoosier parents, "Healthy Habits for Healthy Kids." Healthy Habits for Healthy Kids is a 16-page color brochure developed by the American Dietetic Association and reviewed by more than 200 physicians and a panel of registered dietitians from across the nation. This guide provides practical advice for making good nutrition and physical fitness a part of everyday life for Indiana families. Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield will help distribute 500 thousand copies of the brochure in the months ahead.

"We at Anthem are alarmed at the trends and want to work with others to be a part of the solution," said Dennis Casey, President of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield. "Healthy Habits for Healthy Kids represents another tool in our fight against obesity. It's a natural addition to the Governor's INShape Indiana program and other initiatives designed to make us a healthier state."

Lloyd J. Kolbe, Ph.D., Professor, Indiana University, was on hand to share his obesity prevention model, which Indiana communities can use to implement their obesity prevention plans at the local level.

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“Obesity is costing Hoosiers their futures,” said Dr. Kolbe. “We all pay the medical expenses that derive from obesity, whether we are obese or not, because our medical insurance premiums and taxes are rising to treat increasing obesity-related conditions. In turn, employers must increase the prices of goods and services to cover these costs. We can reduce obesity, but only if we all work together.”

During a variety of presentations from health experts and community leaders, participants were given tools, like Dr. Kolbe’s model, to implement new programs, build collaborations among existing programs, and to put into place modules to gauge their success. During a break-out session in the afternoon, participants worked together with other delegates from their local community to develop a plan of action for fighting obesity on a grassroots level.

“Knowledge is power,” said State Health Commissioner Judith A. Monroe, M.D. “We want the Summit participants to take what they have learned today back to their local communities to start fighting obesity.”

“We can have a healthier state tomorrow, if every Hoosier commits to making healthy choices today,” Dr. Monroe said. “Working together, I know that we can make that happen.”

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